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AA37|FORMER CIA|HARTMAN: Eleven minutes after 7 right now. As we heard |AGENT/ARREST 5|on the news this morning, the FBI has arrested a former CIA employee and charged him with being a spy. Carl Koecher is his name. He faces a possible life sentence if he's convicted of passing the national security information to the Czechoslovakian intelligence service not recently, but back in the mid- to early 1970s. Adm. Stansfield Turner was director of the CIA after that time, during the Carter administration. And he joins us this morning from Washington. Good morning, admiral. TURNER: Good morning, David.

HARTMAN: Two, two words that jumped out when reading about this last night and this morning, he is described, Mr. Koecher, as 'a contract employee of the CIA,' and, also, 'an illegal spy.' Now, what is a contract employee? And what is a (sic) illegal spy? ADM. STANSFIELD TURNER (former director, CIA): Well, all kinds of people are contract employees. Some of them make a contract to work only maybe a day a year, some of them full-time, 365 days. It's just a term for somebody who's not on the full Civil Service payroll. It's not a very significant distinction.

HARTMAN: All right. TURNER: 'Illegal spies,' that's a term the FBI uses to mean that the man, or person, was illegally introduced into this country, originally. Again, it's not a very important distinction. The...

HARTMAN: All right. Here is a man who has come here to the United States, an emigrant. He's a naturalized citizen. He's from another country and so forth. How could he apparently, so easily, get access to top, what appears to be top security information? TURNER: Well, when you have somebody come over from another country and be willing to check us, you check him as carefully as you can. You check the information he brings with him to see if it is valid. You use your own spies in his country to find out if there is some background on this man that you should know. You run tests on him. You surveille him to see whether he's still in contact with people he should not be in contact with. Sometimes, you get taken in. David, it just happens in this case that this came at the end of a long period of rather poor counterintelligence work in the CIA. And in the middle of this man's time

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with the CIA, then-Director Bill Colby fired the chief of counterintelligence. So, I suspect that this was an error on the CIA's part because it wasn't running counterintelligence during that period.

HARTMAN: We read that he might have released information about the identification of CIA agents. How significant, how important, is that? How much damage could he have done in that way? TURNER: Well, anything from rather little to a very great deal. And we just have no way of gauging that. Perhaps, we'll know more when it goes to trial and the agency has to bring a little more information to light in order to get a conviction.

HARTMAN: How dangerous that the agency will have to make public information in this whole trial process that they don't wanna release? TURNER: Well, it used to be very serious. It was a problem I faced several times during my tenure of, how far would we go in releasing information that could hurt us, in order to convict somebody who had hurt us or hurt our country? In 1981, the Congress passed a very helpful law that lets a judge decide to keep some of this information what they call 'in camera,' so that only the defense and the judge know what there was of a secret nature. I think that will help very much in this case. It was a good law.

HARTMAN: Is it possible that the CIA or the agency, intelligence community, was using him over this 11-year period that's passed since he supposedly was passing secret (sic)? TURNER: There is some possibility that this was sort of a doube, double-agent deal and that the agency knew what the man was doing, and therefore, didn't pull the chain on him until he went to leave the country yesterday.

HARTMAN: Admiral, thank you. Welcome back. TURNER: Thank you.

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